

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Disclosed is an optical element disposed in a container having an inside ambience independent from an outside of the container, and rinsed by  
5 irradiation with ultraviolet rays from a light source outside the container. Also disclosed is a rinsing method, having a first step for accommodating an article, to be rinsed, into a second container disposed inside a first container and being adapted to maintain  
10 an ambience different from that of the first container, a second step for introducing a rinsing gas into the second container, and a third step for irradiating the article with ultraviolet rays from a light source disposed inside the first container but outside the  
15 second container.